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Editor, New York Times:

E. Barrett Prettyman, Jr., has 20-20 hindsight on the First Amendment in his op ed article of January 22.

His earlier record made the right to slander within the United States a right of the CIA. So that we might survive as a nation, no less.

In the suit brought against a CIA operative in 1968 Prettyman teamed with Paul R. Connally, partner in the Edward Bennett Williams law firm, to immunize CIA operatives from slander uttered "in the line of duty," in the words of the court decision (upheld by the Supreme Court April 19, 1971).

Contemporaneous reporting is pertinent today because of the encouragement to illicit and anti-Constitutional CIA acts:

"The CIA's immunity defense raised controversy over the agency's proper domestic role..." And the circuit court found the slander "legitimate measures to protect the secrecy of America's foreign intelligence sources..."

What was called "national security" was served by the slander of an Estonian emigre, "a lecturer on the evils of Communism" by calling him a Soviet agent.

And <u>within</u> the United States this then became "legitimate measures to protect the secrecy of America's foreign intelligence sources..."

Thanks to Mr. Prettyman and Mr. Connally the CIA was encouraged in acts that are subversive of fundamental rights and are a step toward the police state.

For "national security," of course.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

(Quotes from Washington Post 6/7/69,4/20/71. If your morgue has other stories, I'd appreciate copies, thanks.)